

economy was not the central concern of the American people. At a time when it is the central concern of the American people, we cannot be talking about raising taxes by tens of billions of dollars. We need to be expanding the family budget, not the Federal budget. The House should know that in this economy, this is a principle Senate Republicans will defend aggressively.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. McCASKILL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OBSTRUCTIONISM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today I am here to talk about the obstructionism across the aisle and how it is hurting our country, preventing progress, preventing change at a time when Americans demand change. This chart says it all: 73 Republican filibusters and counting.

The Republican Party, Leader McConnell, and others have pointed out that a handful of the filibusters may have been started by Democrats. We can look at the circumstances of those. Maybe those were done because there was no choice, because somebody else was delaying in another way. But let's say there were 10 of these that are Democratic. Then we will change this number from 73 to 63. It is still overwhelming. It is still the record.

The point we are making is very simple: This Republican minority, unable to put forward its own agenda, unable because they are not in sync with America, can only obstruct. If you had a single word to describe the tenor of the Republican minority this year and last year, this session of Congress thus far, it would be "obstruct." If you needed two words, it would be "obstruct, obstruct." If you needed a few more words, it would be "obstruct, obstruct, and then obstruct again; get in the way."

Admittedly, this body was designed, in the wisdom of the Founding Fathers, to be the cooling saucer. This body is supposed to take a careful look and slow things down. But there are times when history demands change. There are times when the minority has understood that, and even though they would modify the way change occurs, they don't stand in the way and just say no. This is one of those times.

Technology has changed our world. It is not the same world it was even 10 or 15 years ago.

Technology has created terrorism. Why? Small groups of bad people have been enabled by technology to strike at New York or London or Madrid and innocent civilians.

Technology has created one global labor market in so many different areas. It means the kids in the schools of New York or Arkansas or Missouri have to compete with the kids at schools in Berlin and Beijing and Bangor. It means that jobs are competing. It used to be New York State would compete with Connecticut and New Jersey and Pennsylvania and Missouri and Arkansas. Now we compete around the globe. That is technology, nothing else.

Technology has allowed us all to live longer. Praise God. The average life expectancy goes up and up and up. I have a Dad who is 84. He plays golf. Thirty years ago, a man 84 was rare, and when someone was 84, they were old and frail. My dad, who led a hard life—so happy he now has a nice, happy life—is active. He drives all around, argues with my mother about how far he can drive, and all of that.

We live longer, but that creates new strains on us as well. What about health care for our elderly people? The costs go up, and every one of us would give our right arm to see our mother or father have another good year of health, or husband or wife or child. It means pensions and what we do with later-life changes. It also means we live longer and things get stretched out. People get married later. They are not in a rush to get married and have a family. They find careers later. They experiment. In the day when you had to just get a job quickly—a lot of people don't do that anymore. So it has changed that.

Technology has even changed little things. Our parents felt very much in control of us. I would get home at 3 o'clock from grade school, and I would go out on my street to play. It was baby boom time. There were 50, 60 kids. We played all kinds of games and ran around. These days, more likely, the children stay home. They are on the Internet. Lord knows what they are seeing. It is a different world.

Technology has changed everything, and technology demands that the U.S. Government help people adjust to that technology so they can continue to have the great American life. That is what America is demanding—change. Look at the polls. They are unprece-

dented. How many people think our country, under George Bush's leadership, is moving in the right direction? A smaller and smaller percentage. How many people think we need significant change? A larger and larger percentage. We can argue about what that change should be, but change we must or our children and even ourselves in later years will not have the same good life we have today.

We on the Democratic side are seeking to bring about some of that change. Some of it is quite large—change the course of the war in Iraq, change our health care system, change our energy policy. Some of it is smaller but important.

What do we face from the other side? The word "no" and the word "no" again and the word "no" again. Using the Senate rules, which allow them to require 60 votes on even the smallest measures, they have slowed everything down. Again, the exact number is not the point; it is that they have set the record. Republican filibusters are rampant. A few of these are ours, many are theirs. They will get to 73 soon, I assure you.

Why do they do it? I will tell you why. I try to study history a little bit. I am hardly a Ph.D. in history, but I like to read about it, think about it. There are times when there is a paradigm shift in our politics. The year 1980 was one such time. Most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle came in in that 1980 Ronald Reagan paradigm: strong security, shrink government, family values. Those were very attractive. Now the times have changed. The old way doesn't work. But their base—20 percent of the electorate but half, maybe more, of the Republican base—is stuck in that old world. So they have one foot in one camp. They see where the public is, but they can't move. Their base and their inability to break with that base have them paralyzed. So there is only one choice—obstruct, say no. When you can't say yes about anything, say no. That is what they have done—63, 65, 67, 68, 69. Again, we are busy calculating how many, but it is a whole lot, and it is a record.

Let me talk about one example, the housing crisis. Our economy is heading south. The numbers are not good. Unemployment is going up. Job creation is meager, anemic almost. The amount of income people have is declining, and expenses are going up. Just to continue to buy energy—oil, gas, heating oil—food, with prices that have gone through the roof because of energy in part, eats up all of most average families' extra income. So our economy is hurting.

What is at the bull's-eye of that economic downturn? It is housing, all kinds of problems. Again, the old philosophy, Reagan philosophy—don't regulate these new mortgage brokers—has led to a disaster. The banks were pretty regulated. They are not to blame in this crisis by and large, the initial